

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

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C O N F I D E N T I A L KINGSTON 0766

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ECON, JM

SUBJECT: PM MANLEY WOOS PRIVATE SECTOR

1. PM MANLEY MEETING ON REGULAR BASIS WITH PRIVATE SECTOR GROUP AT LATTER'S REQUEST TO DISCUSS CRIME, COMMUNISM, WAGES, GENERAL ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND OTHER ISSUES. GROUP CONSISTS OF 13-15 REPRESENTATIVES OF PRIVATE FIRMS CHAIRED BY MAYER MATALON (FYI- ORIGINAL GROUP OF 60 CONSIDERED UNWIELDING AND INEFFECTIVE; MATALON WELL KNOWN PNP SUPPORTER, EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL BUSINESSMAN, AND CHIEF GOJ NEGOTIATOR WITH BAUXITE/ALUMINA COMPANIES)

2. FIRST MEETING FEBRUARY 10 FOCUSED ON CRIME AND VIOLENCE. MANLEY REPORTEDLY TOLD GROUP THAT EVERYTHING UNDER CONTROL, AND GOJ DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO COPE WITH SITUATION. SECOND MEETING FEBRUARY 17 DEALT WITH CURRENT POLITICAL SITUATION. PRESIDENT OF JAMAICA MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION, FOUGLAS VAZ, WHO WAS PRESENT TOLD ECONOFF THAT PM EXPLAINED PNP ORGANIZATION AND OTHER POLITICAL "FACTS OF LIFE". HE ALSO DISCUSSED HISTORICAL BACKGROUND FOR PNP FOREIGN POLICIES, PUTTING GOJ EFFORT OBTAIN NEW MARKETS FOR BAUXITE IN TERMS OF DIVERSIFICATION. BOTH VAX AND OTHERS TOLD ECONOFF THAT MANLEY SAID HE WAS NOT COMMUNIST, HAD NO INTENTION OF BECOMING COMMUNIST, WOULD DO EVERYTHING POSSIBLE PREVENT COUNTRY FROM BECOMING COMMUNIST, AND HAD AGREEMENT WITH CASTRO THAT LATTER WOULD NOT

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INTERFERE IN JAMAICA. VAZ SAID MANLEY PERSONALLY

AFFECTED BY INCREASINGLY VOCAL CRITICISM AND OPPOSITION TO HIS POLICIES AND "HIS Demeanor REFLECTS THIS".

3 ALTHOUGH VAZ, FREQUENT OUTSPOKEN CRITIC OF MANLEY, WAS IMPRESSED WITH PM'S PRESENTATION, OTHERS REMAINED SKEPTICAL. ONE BUSINESSMAN TOLD ECONOFF PRIVATE SECTOR "TIRED OF HEARING SLOGANS ABOUT EGALITARIANISM, DEMOCRATIC SOCIALISM, ETC. WHEN THEY WANTED TO KNOW IF THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO GET SPARE PARTS, RAW MATERIALS, MAKE A PROFIT ETC.". NEXT MEETING TENTATIVELY FIRST WEEK IN MARCH TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC SITUATION.

4. COMMENT: MANLEY'S EFFORTS EXPLAIN HIS POLICIES TO PRIVATE SECTOR BEGAN SEVERAL MONTHS AGO, BUT BUSINESS COMMUNITY REMAINS SKEPTICAL OF HIS MOTIVES. MATALON CONSIDERS HIMSELF REPRESENTATIVE OF "PROGRESSIVE" GROUP AND HIS SELECTION AS CHAIRMAN MAY IMPROVE MANLEY'S ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE ON PRAGMATIC AS OPPOSED TO POLITICAL ISSUES. HOWEVER, SUCCESSFUL COURTSHIP

NEEDS RESOLUTION AS WELL AS ROSES.
HOUDEK

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